

News

from the Illinois Commerce Commission

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ICC Cites Peoples Gas in Pipeline Safety Inspections

The Illinois Commerce Commission today initiated a citation case against Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company for failure to conduct corrosion control monitoring and for failing to take prompt action to correct deficiencies that had been identified previously.

Preventing corrosion of underground natural gas lines requires regular inspections to assist in assessing the rate of change in the physical condition of iron and steel pipelines, which may corrode due to chemical and electrochemical reactions. Cathodic protection reduces the corrosion rate of metal gas pipes and the gas system operator is responsible to ensure that the protection devices are in place and working.

ICC pipeline safety inspectors routinely inspect natural gas pipelines around the state and verify inspection records kept by gas utilities. ICC inspectors visited 190 locations on Peoples Gas' system that require a reading every ten years to verify cathodic protection levels and discovered that about one-half of the corrosion test points had inadequate levels of corrosion protection. Pipeline safety inspectors also visited over 180 locations on Peoples Gas' system that require annual readings to verify cathodic protection levels and discovered that about one-third of the corrosion test points had inadequate levels of corrosion protection.

In further field verifications of natural gas operator records to prove the integrity and content of written records, inspectors found a large number of inconsistencies, which staff indicated, "calls into very serious question the integrity of Peoples Gas' corrosion control and monitoring records and safety records."

The citation proceeding initiated today will allow the Commission to determine whether Peoples Gas has failed to comply with federal and state inspection requirements and if so whether they may be fined for those safety violations.

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